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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GABORONE 000567

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL MASS SADC BC

SUBJECT: AMB, SADC HEAD DISCUSS ZIMBABWE, MADAGASCAR,
MILITARY ISSUES

REF: STATE 70664

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen J. Nolan for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Ambassador Nolan met with Dr. Tomaz Salomao, Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on July 15 at SADC House to deliver reftel demarche on Zimbabwe and discuss other pending issues. According to Salomao, SADC believes that all requests to review problems in Zimbabwe should come through the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC), since JOMIC is the officially recognized mechanism to resolve disputes under the Global Political Agreement (GPA). Salomao said that he has told the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) to bring their concerns to SADC through the JOMIC, but that this has not yet happened. SADC will not press Zimbabwe on the date for new elections, according to Dr. Salomao because the GPA does not establish a specific timetable. The Ambassador and Salomao also briefly discussed the upcoming AGOA forum, Madagascar, and security cooperation. Ambassador Nolan also spoke to Lt. Gen. Tanki Mothae, Director of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense, and Security, July 16 about Zimbabwe and security cooperation. Mothae promised that the USG would be invited soon to observe Golfhino and gave an update on SADC's response on defense cooperation. END SUMMARY.

Zimbabwe: Bring Complaints Through JOMIC, No Elections Timetable

¶2. (C) Ambassador Nolan met with SADC Executive Secretary Dr. Tomaz Salomao July 15 at SADC House. The Ambassador delivered reftel A demarche on Zimbabwe and encouraged SADC to continue to use its good offices to resolve outstanding problems with GPA implementation and assist the transitional government in Zimbabwe to succeed. The Ambassador asked what response SADC had made to the MDC's May 21 request to review challenges to the spirit and the law of the GPA. Dr. Salomao said that he did not receive this request until June 20th during the World Economic Forum in Cape Town. He also explained that under the GPA, the JOMIC was established to deal with problems such as these. Therefore, he felt that it was improper for the MDC to bring this request to SADC unilaterally rather than through the JOMIC. Though he has advised MDC to bring their concerns to SADC through JOMIC, according to SADC has not received any such request (from JOMIC) regarding the allegations. Salomao also explained that SADC made a conscious decision to focus their June 20 summit agenda on Madagascar, and for that reason they decided not to "muddy the waters" by also delving into Zimbabwe issues with GPA implementation.

¶3. (C) Dr. Salomao made it clear that he did not believe

SADC should pressure Zimbabwe regarding the timing of new elections, noting that no timetable was specified in the GPA. Dr. Salomao agreed that the next election in Zimbabwe would be important, but noted that timing would have to be agreed by the parties themselves and not imposed from outside. Dr. Salomao was willing to concede that there were some issues moving too slowly, in particular decisions about the continued tenure of the Reserve Bank Governor and Attorney General. He stated that many Zimbabweans tell him the country is now more stable and peaceful, but he also said that "this is a difficult process and it is a difficult thing to ensure that the parties are coming together to deal with the difficult problems." Dr. Salomao indicated his main concern was the protection of the Zimbabwean people, specifically whether the police and the Home Affairs Ministry were carrying out their responsibilities evenhandedly. He claimed he was now hearing reports that, in some villages where there is now greater support for the MDC, MDC supporters are "harassing" ZANU-PF supporters.

¶4. (C) Dr. Salomao said that the GOZ is due to submit a report on its progress to SADC in September. In the meantime, Salomao plans to talk to both President Mugabe and Prime Minister Tsvangirai "soon" (as he hasn't spoken with them both since June 8) to get a direct reading on how things are progressing. In a conversation on July 16, Lt. Gen. Tanki Mothae said that there was a ministerial level meeting on politics and diplomacy taking place in Swaziland the weekend of July 18, and that this meeting would receive updates and reports on peace and security and human rights issues, and that Zimbabwe would be one of the items on the

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agenda.

AGOA, Madagascar, and Defense Cooperation

¶5. (C) Ambassador Nolan asked Dr. Salomao whether he had received his invitation to the upcoming AGOA Forum in Nairobi. Dr. Salomao stated that he was not yet certain if he would be attending, as he was still consulting to see if it "would be appropriate." (Comment: Post was uncertain exactly what this comment meant, but wondered if Salomao was reluctant to appear to be getting too close to the United States - a common criticism often leveled by some leaders in Southern Africa - by attending a forum on a major U.S. initiative. End Comment.)

¶6. (C) Regarding Madagascar, Dr. Salomao says that he has been closely following the efforts to get the parties to talk. He said that former President Chissano has been in touch with all parties in the last week and that they are interested in negotiating. However, according to Salomao, SADC is still working out details to enable negotiations.

¶7. (C) Turning to security cooperation, the Ambassador reminded the Executive Secretary that the USG is still awaiting responses to our communications earlier this year regarding USG participation in the SADC military exercise "Golphino" as well as the broader offer to begin defense cooperation with SADC. He assured Salomao that the USG is still interested engaging with and supporting SADC's standby brigade. Dr. Salomao encouraged the Ambassador to follow-up with Lt. Gen. Mothae, which he did on July 16. Mothae explained that a generic invitation to Golphino will be issued soon, at which point we can reply to SADC regarding the exact composition of our observer delegation. Regarding the outstanding information the USG requires from SADC to move forward on implementing the Presidential Determination on defense cooperation, Mothae explained that he personally was the drafter of SADC's response to the detailed set of USG questions. He apologized for the tardy reply but assured the Ambassador he was working on a response, but that he simply had not

found time to complete it. The Ambassador thanked Mothae for his efforts and encouraged him to provide at least an interim reply as soon as possible, in order to begin the process.

NOLAN